

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace Paragraph [0003] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0003] We have found that for some applications it may be desirable to have a latch mechanism that can provide more positive locking of the dust collection module in a vacuum cleaner housing than is provided by the notches and snap-lock latches of EP-A-0783865 A-9783865 (Application number 97300134.0-2316, Black and Decker Inc). We have also found that while this more positive locking mechanism may be desirable for any normal vacuum operation since it ensures that the dust collection module is released only for emptying, it is especially advantageous to provide the more positive locking arrangement on the dust collection module at times when another part is being moved relative to the dust collection module, since this relative movement could otherwise cause accidental removal of the dust collection module.

Please replace Paragraph [0040] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0040] The vacuum cleaner shown is powered by rechargeable batteries, and a rechargeable mount for electrical connection to a mains charging supply is provided under the removable cap 19, which may be a screw or push fit attachment. It is also envisaged that the vacuum cleaner could be ~~mains~~ powered by an AC power source.

Please replace Paragraph [0044] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0044] Considering first the latch member 81, this is an elongate member that comprises a central metal helical spring ~~biasing portion~~ 91 and two elongate end housing-engagement-portions 124 secured to the spring 91 at either end thereof. The spring is of uniform cross section and is located at either end around projecting stubs 125 on the inwardly facing ends 126 of each of the housing engagement portions 124. Each end housing-engagement portion 124 is a solid elongate part. It is substantially rectangular in cross-section. Each end housing engagement portion has a recessed portion 128 of smaller thickness part way along its length. Each recessed portion 128 is bounded by a first straight surface 130 extending substantially perpendicular to the axis of the elongate latch member 81 on the outer side of the recessed portion 128, and a second sloping cam surface 89 on the inner side of the recessed portion 128. The second sloping cam surface 89 contains a channel shaped groove 134 part way along its surface, extending into the thickness of the end housing-engagement portions 124. The inwardly facing ends 126 of each of the end housing-engagement portions 124 comprise a flange 135 projecting to the side facing the shuttle member 7 as shown in Figure 2.

Please replace Paragraph [0054] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0054] Latch member 81 is contained within the dust bowl 5 and rests on the bottom surface of the dust bowl 5. It is shown end-on in Figure 3. Upward motion of

the latch member ~~[[3]]~~ 81 relative to the dust bowl 5 is substantially prevented by flanges 93 that project from the front face of the dust bowl into the dust bowl 5, just above the latch member 81. Similarly movement of the latch member 81 into the body of the dust bowl (i.e. to the right in the orientation shown in Figure 3) is substantially prevented by a stepped portion 95 of the backing plate 53, which stepped portion 95 lies behind the latch member 81. Therefore the latch member 81 is substantially fixed relative to the dust bowl in all directions other than into and out of the page. Movement into and out of the page is allowed, and indeed is used to engage and disengage the housing portion 3 of the vacuum cleaner, as described in more detail below, with reference to Figures 5 and 6 in particular.

Please replace Paragraph [0058] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0058] Figure 4 shows the inner surface of the dust bowl 5, and in particular shows the inwardly directed ~~ridges~~ flanges 93 which are used to prevent upward movement of the latch member 81 relative to the dust bowl 5. It can be seen that five separate parts form the inwardly directed flanges 93, and there are outer spaces 94 and inner spaces 96 between the five separate parts. The purpose of the outer spaces 94 is to allow for passage of projecting portions 138 on the lower surface of the release member 7 to pass through. The purpose of the inner spaces 96 is to allow passage of the projecting flange 135 on the end housing-engagement portions of the latch member 81. These spaces also limit inward and outward movement of the latch member 81. This is described in more detail with reference to Figures 5 and 6.

Please replace Paragraph [0061] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0061] Figures 5 and 6 show the operation of the elongate latch member 81 and release member 7 in more detail. These Figures are cross-sectional views of the vacuum cleaner, taken through the shuttle member 7, as viewed from the front of the vacuum cleaner, showing the shuttle in lowered (Figure 5) and raised (figure 6) position. As can be seen by comparison of Figures 7 and 8, when the shuttle member 7 is lowered the end housing engagement portions 124 ~~of the latch member 81~~ of the spring biased latch member 81 are caused to move towards each other, (i.e. the elongate latch member shortens in length) by the action of co-operating cam surfaces 87 and 89 on the shuttle member 7 and latch member 81 respectively. Inward movement of the end housing-engagement portions 124 is limited by the inner flanges 135 on the end housing-engagement portions 124 which abut against the inner edge of the inner spaces 96 between the separate parts of the inwardly directed flanges 93 from the dust bowl 5. The shortening in length of the latch member 81 acts against the biasing force of a spring member 91 forming the central part of the latch member 81.

Please replace Paragraph [0064] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0064] As can be seen in Figures 7 and 8 dust bowl 5 has a front face (facing into the page in Figure 5) that comprises [[a]] the first substantially flat faced portion 27 that extends substantially vertically upwards from the lower surface of the main housing

portion 3, and [[a]] the second recessed portion 29 extending from the first portion 27 first to the front of the vacuum cleaner (reference 29'), and then rearwards in [[a]] the curved shape (reference 29") to form part of the upper surface of the vacuum cleaner (see also Figures 1A). The front face 27, 29 of the dust bowl contains two apertures for air; a first aperture 33 which is in the first flat faced portion 27 of the front face of the dust bowl, and a second inlet 35 which is in the second recessed portion 29" of the front face of the dust bowl 5.

Please replace Paragraph [0065] with the following paragraph rewritten in amendment format:

[0065] As already described with reference to Figure 2, the shuttle member 7 comprises [[a]] first lower, substantially flat portion 69 integrally moulded with [[a]] second upper block shaped portion 71. In common with the dust bowl 5, the shuttle member 7 also contains two air inlets; [[a]] first inlet in the form of a slot shaped aperture 47 in the first substantially flat portion 69 of the shuttle member 7, and [[a]] second air inlet in the form of a tubular inlet 49 of generally rectangular cross section through the block shaped portion 71 of the shuttle member.